Agricultural loans

277. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of middle-class farmers, marginal farmers and rich farmers who applied for agricultural loans in the year 2003-04;

(b) the number of farmers of different categories who actually received loans;

(c) the number of farmers of each category who were getting agricultural loans and were refused in the year 2003-04, State-wise; and

(d) the plans of Government to provide loans to the farmers in the year 2004-05?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) The data compilation sytem of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) does not generate information in the manner asked for. However, the number of borrowal accounts in respect of scheduled commercial banks according to the size of land holding of farmers as at the end of June 2002 is as under:

Marginal Farmers (land holding up to 2.5 acres)		Small Farmers (land holding above 2.5 to 5 acres)		Other Farmers (land holding above 5 acres)	
No. of A/c in respect of Amount Dispersed	No. of A/c in respect of Amount Outstanding	No. of A/c in respect of Amount Dispersed	No. of A/c in respect of Amount Outstanding	No. of A/c in respect of Amount Dispersed	No. of A/c in respect of Amount Outstanding
2678561	4901589	1933007	3980779	2358451	3394375

(d) Government has announced on 18th June, 2004 a plan of action to increase the Ground Level Credit Flow to Agriculture by 30% during the current financial year.

GDP Growth Rate

278. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that GDP growth rate is expected to grow over 8 per cent during the current fiscal;

(b) if so, the factors responsible for the same; and

(c) in what manner Government propose to cash in the growth in international arena?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) The Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) has not made any forecast of growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the current year 2004-05. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its Annual Policy Statement released on May 18, 2004 has placed the real GDP growth for 2004-05 at 6.5 per cent, on the assumption of a trend growth of about 3 per cent in agriculture and the industry and service sectors maintaining their current growth momentum.

(c) With the strengthening and broadening of global recovery, prospects for Indian exports look bright in 2004-05. The Union Budget for 2004-05 has proposed a new tax regime for the textile sector to enable it to become competitive and improve its exports after the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing comes to an end on December 31, 2004.

Foreign Exchange Reserve

279. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Forex inflow has been continuing thus inflating Forex reserve;

(b) if so, whether Government have arrived at a safe and optimal level to keep the Forex reserves and utilise the balance for repaying the foreign debt;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir. Substantial foreign exchange inflows during the last two years have led to a large accretion of foreign exchange reserves.

(b) There are no commonly acceptable yardsticks regarding the optimal level of reserves. Existing yardsticks like import cover, short-term debt, and liquidity at risk, are essentially indicative in nature. Thus,